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CHERRY FEASTS

— FOR —

BARBAROUS FOURTHS



BY ASENATH CARVER COOLIDGE







Cherry Feast for
Familarious Fountains

Cherry Feasts for Barbarous Fourths

Cherry Feasts for Barbarous Fourths

By Asenath Carver Coolidge

Author of "The Independence Day Horror at Kill-
bury," "Prophet of Peace," "Between Two Re-
bellions," "Christmas vs. Fourth of July"
and many other short stories and poems

*Think of it O restless and reckless youth!
How much better it is to cultivate the
useful and beautiful, than the useless and
brutal!*

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HUNGERFORD-HOLBROOK CO.,
WATERTOWN, N. Y.

Dedicated to my Grand-niece



JULIA COOLIDGE CURTISS
Name-sake of
JULIA SLOAN COOLIDGE

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Preface

Young mother cat was sleek and fat,
As mother cat should be.
She had three kits in Grandpa's hat
Which we all laughed to see.

Poor Grandpa swore, and then he wore
His old straw hat to church:
And never smiled so sweet before,
Said Moll and Lyme and Burch.

Then came the Fourth o' July morn,
And Lyme and Burch went down—
Bought new-style fireworks enough
To burn and wreck the town.

Young mother cat had never seen,
Nor smelt such stuff before.
No wonder that her eyes turned green
When Burch shot through the door.

Nor that she rumbled up her back,
And hissed and yowled and yowled
At every snap and fizz and crack
That room or hat befouled.

Nor that when mad, with sport young Lyme
Approached her little ones
She flew upon his back and scratched
And made him drop his guns.

A victor! Still she would not quit
But bit and gored his face,
And spat an "Independence" spit
At "Fourth of July" pace.

We got her claws unhooked at last.
Poor Lyme, we thought him dead.
We sent in haste for Dr. Nast
Who bathed his reeking wounds and said:

Cheer up, my lad, it's not so bad
As lockjaw would have been.
Then mother cat, she sat and purred,
And Grandpa groaned "Amen."

ASENATH CARVER COOLIDGE

Watertown, N. Y.
June, 1909

Cherry Feasts for Barbarous Fourths

PART I.

PROFESSOR HOMER was walking slowly along Cluny Avenue. It was the last week of the school term and he was mentally tired; but his boarding house was not the haven he longed for.

"O! if Gean were only here," he whispered.

Gean was his wife whom he had married down in Cherry Valley, last cherry-bloom time. She could not be with him because she also had a school and it was the last week of her school term.

"Poor Gean! She is tired too, no doubt," he continued, "and wishing that I were *there*."

The last clause of the sentence was cheering. He wished himself *there* and lo! he was *there*, in imagination—there in sweet, luscious Cherry Valley, sitting under the cherry trees with Gean of the cherry-ripe lips.

A delightful spot it was—the home of Morello Brand—from any point of view. From the hills above the valley his cherry orchard *looked* like a huge bouquet, in cherry-bloom time; and "*smelled* to heaven" with an odor more acceptable than that

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of hot-house plants. His cottage grounds were shaded and ornamented with lesser clumps of cherry trees, more artistically arranged. Beauty with utility was his motto. He had a few other fruit trees in his garden but the cherry trees were his prime favorites, because, as he stoutly maintained, they combined the elements of beauty and utility in the highest degree. He had them in all the different colors and best varieties. He made a fine spring tonic from their bark. His children played under their shade and ate freely of their fruit. His wife dried, canned, pickled and preserved it and sent generous basketsfull to those who were so unfortunate as not to have any. His daughters made rare cherry confections and pastries and puddings and creams.

Not only was the Brand home beautified with cherry trees but the Cherry Valley school house was surrounded with them; and it was there that Professor Homer saw Gean Brand and fell so deeply in love with her that he could not wait until her school term was ended to make her his own.

"I feel as though we must be married while the cherry trees are in full blossom," pleaded the professor, when he asked her father's consent. "There is no time to be lost. The blossoms will soon begin to fall."

The appeal was effective; more so, no doubt, than it would have been if the compliment to the cherry trees had been left out, and so they were

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married the next day, in the neat parlor with the windows all open and the odor of the cherry blossoms streaming in like incense.

No wonder that Professor Homer lived the scene all over again and longed to be there and enjoy the fruit of that blessed blossoming. He was as fond as a boy of ripe cherries and this was just the season for them. The thought of eating them out of Gean's little juice-spattered hand made him smack his lips; but the thought of eating at all, at such a juncture, was a carnal one and brought him back to Cluny Avenue and, worse still, to the familiar voices of two of his worst scholars, "rogues Tim and Ben" he called them. He did not like the sound but he stopped to listen as though compelled by a sense of duty.

"Cherry Valley! Pshaw! I've heard 'nuff 'bout that. Old Proff's dead mashed on it. What I want to know is what you are going to do on the Fourth," said Ben.

"O! I'm going to throw torpedoes at the girls and make them screech and hop, just as they did last year, I s'pose, only more so, 'cause the torpedoes will be bigger, I reckon. What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to do a lot more'n I did last year. I scared only one horse, and threw one man and woman and baby out and made the baby screech and hurt the woman's arm and stove the buggy all to bits. This year I am going to get four boxes

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of fire-works out of the Governor and I'm going to scare Cherry Brand's horses and spill out his whole cart-load of young-'uns. He wouldn't let me ride one day when I caught on and I'm going to send him flying for all he's worth. Independence Day is a bully day to pay off a grudge. Golly! what fun it will be to pick up the pieces. They allus have a lot of cherries and cookies and roses and flags on board."

"Perhaps he won't come this Fourth," remarked Tim, "and we shall have to scare somebody else; 'twon't do to cave in when there's so much shoot-in' going on over'n Fillippeno."

"They'll come fast 'nuff. He's stuck on show-in' 'em off," said Ben.

"Well they are a pretty sight, in their cart, all covered with cherry branches and the girls all in white with sprigs and crowns on 'em. I don't wonder old Prof. got mashed on the biggest girl. I guess she's handsomer'n the Fillipino girls our soldiers are getting mashed on," said Tim. "I reckon old Prof. will be in the cart this time."

"No he won't," replied Ben. "They are going off on a wedding *tower* as soon as school closes. They'll be out of the way."

"And we will be in the way."

"Lucky! Plucky! Jokey! Pokey!"—they sang in chorus as they skipped away, leaving the Professor rooted, to the spot. He did not stay rooted, however, for he felt that something must be

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done at once. His first thought was to inform the chief of police and have the boys shut up, but he abandoned it when he reflected how prone cops were to regard such schemes as mere boys' talk. His second thought was to go to their parents and counsel them to have an eye on them during the Fourth; but he gave that up also, when he considered that the parental eye was not always to be trusted when thus directed, and that sharp-eyed boys like Tim and Ben had a way of evading the parents' inspection long enough to do a mint of mischief.

His last and saner thought was that there would be ten days between the close of the school and the Fourth—enough time surely to thwart the plans of one pair of little rascals; but he was an ardent lover and how could he wait even a day, without throwing the arm of his protection around the loved ones in Cherry Valley? He could not and so he flew to his room in mad haste, wrote the following note and posted it before he slept:

DEAREST GENE: See to it that your father makes no preparation to drive into town on the Fourth for important reasons which I will explain when I come.

I will start the moment school is ended, for dear, luscious Cherry Paradise.

Truly thine, in great haste.

Homer.

After receiving a reply from Gean assuring him that "papa would obey his behests," he felt at ease and set about watching the boys. Were they

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utterly bad, or were they the outgrowth of a bad custom? Were they murderous at heart or were they simply shrewd of intellect and determined to make the most of the liberty, injudiciously accorded to them? These were the questions to be solved; but before he had solved them to his entire satisfaction his school closed and he was hastening to join Gean at Cherry Valley—thinking, by the way, that she might help him answer those hateful questions, in the near future, when she would be with him and able to inspect those terrible boys; or perhaps now, if *she* knew what *he* knew, and so he told her the whole story the night after his arrival and propounded the questions.

“O, I don’t know about the *propounding*,” laughed Gean, “nor any kind of pounding. But I know just how we can manage those boys. The trouble is, they have had too much of the barbarous old Fourth and not half enough cherries. We will invite them to a Cherry Festival with lots of cherries in it and without a solitary firecracker—the kind they have in Naumberg Town. You have read the sweet old German Ballad, have you not?”

“Yes, dearie, but I can’t repeat it.”

“Neither can I, but papa has a copy. He brought it from Germany.”

“Good; we will have it read at the festival.”

“Yes, and you will read it in your beautiful, appreciative way and papa will be delighted.

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He has never liked this wretched Fourth of July celebration although he tried to make the best of it."

"It's horrid, dangerous and idiotic, Geanie, and we will never have anything more to do with it."

"But we will have a splendid Cherry Festival in its place, Homer."

"We will clasp hands over that, Geanie, this blessed minute, and talk with our papa and the others about it in the morning."

Morello Brand was delighted with the proposed change.

"I confess I have always felt a little conscience-smitten for patronizing this Independence Day monster. It is not patriotism at all. It is militarism in its worst shape, and they are trying to introduce militarism in the public schools now. You must look to that, Homer, or you will soon be required to teach young hands how to shoot, instead of young ideas," laughed Brand. "I don't believe you would like that sort of teaching and I know Gean would not."

"No we would not," replied the pair; "and we will keep it out, won't we, Homer," added Gean, resolutely—"out of our school, at least."

"Yes, Geanie; but the thousands elsewhere, in large cities! With military equipments in schools, no schoolhouse would be safe and they are too unsafe now. You remember the shocking accident that occurred in a school by the giving away of

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an outhouse floor—throwing twenty-five children down into the awful vault? With a large mass of military equipments stacked in school buildings such a thing might happen again and again or worse. Only think of having a continual menace of that kind, dearie."

Gean could not bear to think of anything so dreadful. She hid her face in her hands and cried.

"Forgive me for saying such distressing things, Geanie; but if we are going to stand guard against militarism we will have to know the worst. Developing the military spirit in the public schools, means putting thousands of boys on the war-path—young boys, with an imperfectly developed moral sense. With implements of destruction at hand, they might outdo their brothers in college—even Pardoe College!"

"That's where you graduated, Homer?"

"Yes, and went to the *Tank Scrap*, afterward. I shall never forget that fiendish sight—a college campus transformed into an Inferno surrounded by bonfires and triumphant sophomores, dancing a war dance and yelling like devils at a group of four hundred freshmen who were bound hand and foot, covered with dirt and blood, their young faces distorted with looks of genuine hate and defiance. Six of the contestants were fatally injured. Only think of that, Geanie; I never told you before, I was so ashamed of my *Alma Mater*."

"But it was an unusual thing was it not?"

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"Yes, Geanie; but such things are liable to happen at any time and are sure to happen when a war is brewing as there is now; so we must know what we will have to face"

"Yes, Homer, and we will have no hypocrisies, no compromises, such as the substitution of murderous games which have the seeds of militarism in them. We will wash our hands of all that brutality."

"Enough! Enough! my children," called out Morello. "Enough of your far-off will be's. Let us proceed to begin with our demoralizing old Fourth of July branch. We need life-giving branches instead of death-dealing ones. Branches with sweet cherries on them instead of biting explosives, and we will begin by going up to town tomorrow and inviting every one of your scholars to come down to our Cherry Festival. Then we will work like heroes to put out the savage old Fourth, which is worse than the old barbarous Hussite army, that had mercy on the children. If we could put it out so it would stay out with all the rest of the war-promoting celebrations, we would do a better work than was done in old Naumburg Town."

"Good! papa! And you'll arrange to bring the scholars in early enough to have a good cherry breakfast. It would be cruel to ask them to march and listen to the ballad while they were hungry for cherries."

PART II.

IT would be impossible to describe, with all its deliciousness and beauty the Cherry Festival that took place in Cherry Valley at the appointed time. The most notable scene occurred soon after the cherry breakfast, when two hundred contented, cherry-fed school children of all sizes, including Tim and Ben, were comfortably seated under the trees that clustered around the house of Morello Brand. Morello and his charming family, all draped in white and crowned with cherry sprigs, were sitting on the verandah. Professor Homer was reading the beautiful ballad of the Cherry Festival of Naumburg. The children were listening with rapt attention as the charming lines rolled forth:

Hard by the walls of Naumburg town
Four hundred years ago,
Precopius his soldiers led
To fight their Saxon foe.
The blue sky bent above the earth,
In benediction mute;
The tranquil fields reposed content
In blossom, grain and fruit.

But vain the benedicite
Of tender, brooding sky;
And vainly peaceful, smiling fields,
Gave eloquent reply.

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Unsoothed, unmoved, in nature's calm,
The Hussite army lay.
A deadly threatening human storm,
With Naumburg in its way.

To swift destruction now seemed doomed
The dear old Saxon town.
Before Precopius the Great,
The strongest walls went down.
But soon, upon the soft, sweet air
Came sound of tramping feet;
The Hussites quickly flew to arms
Their hated foe to meet.

Ready they stood to face the charge
The great gate opened wide;
And out there poured, not armed men,
But, marching side by side
The little children of the town,
Whose bright eyes met their gaze,
With innocence and courage all
Unversed in war's dread ways.

The men threw all their weapons down
At sight so strange and fair;
They took the children in their arms
And stroked their flaxen hair.
They kissed their cheeks and sweet red lips,
They told how back at home,
They'd left such little ones as these
And then they bade them come,

To cherry orchards close at hand,
And there they stripped the trees
Of branches rich with clustered fruit;
Their little arms with these
They filled and with kind words of peace
They sent them back to town.
The soldiers then all marched away
Nor thought of war's renown.

And now each year, at cherry time
In Naumburg you may see
The little children celebrate
This strange sweet victory.

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Once more the sound of tramping feet
Is heard, as side by side,
They march throughout the quaint old town,
In childhood's joyous pride.

Once more they bear within their arms
Green branches through whose leaves
Ripe cherries gleam, that tell a tale
Richer than fancy weaves.
About a bloodless battle fought
Four centuries ago,
When children saved old Naumburg town
By conquering its foe.

As soon as the last notes of Professor Homer's voice died away there was a mighty clapping of hands, both little and big, and then "the sound of tramping feet," as "side by side" they marched, first to the school house and had their arms filled with cherry branches—then to the rectory, where they were graciously received by the rector and wife, and refreshed with a luncheon of cherry pie. After that they tramped all over the beautiful valley—down by the thickly shaded river banks, and up the shining hillsides, shouting, singing and waving the green branches through whose leaves "ripe cherries gleamed," until Professor Homer called a halt and return march to Morello Brand's, where they rested under the shade of the cherry trees, and listened to a concise history of their growth and cultivation from the reign of Lucullus down to the present century. It was not a dull history for the reason that Brand knew how to make it appeal to the varying moods of child nature. When he announced that there were

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over eighty kinds of cherry trees, of which he had twenty, they were astonished. When he repeated the names of the best varieties—the Bigarreaux, Dukes, Morellos and Geans, they were interested. When he informed them that his father was a cherry cultivator in Germany and had named him after the Morello, they smiled. When he added that he had continued the custom by naming his oldest daughter, Gean, after the wild variety, and his oldest son, Mahaleb, after the perfumed variety, they laughed outright. When he averred that a nice kind of gum oozed from their stems which was not like the bad kind that scholars chewed in school they clapped their hands. When he passed around a cake of toilet soap perfumed with the kernel of the Mahaleb cherry, they sniffed it with great zest. When he stated that the rustic seats and benches on which they sat were made of the branches and wood of the red cherry tree of America, they inspected them with a show of great curiosity. And when he told them that the woodwork in his house was made of the same useful wood and the furniture also, in different grades of workmanship and polish, they accepted his invitation to inspect it with great eagerness.

After the latter performance they were treated to a delicious supper with all sorts of cherry make ups, such as cherry pudding, cherry cream and cherry candies.

"It was a great success," said Morello Brand,

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after the last load containing Tim and Ben had departed; "especially so far as the rogues were concerned. I thought it best to send them in the last load though. It will be too late to hatch mischief, even if they are not too full of goodies to prevent them."

"Good instruction as well as good cherries," said Professor Homer. "You have the same genius for making history entertaining and instructive that you have for making the cherry tree ornamental and useful. Allow me to congratulate you; and you Genie! Bless your heart for suggesting the festival as a curative for those terrible boys. I believe nothing else would have succeeded."

"But the ballad, Homer. How touchingly you read it! I saw tears in their eyes when you read with a quiver in your voice, as though some one had just escaped from mortal hurt, the verse that says:

"The men threw all their weapons down
And took the children in their arms—"

It was a story of love, lovingly told and its effect on Tim and Ben settles the question about their being murderous at heart. Does it not?"

"Yes, Genie, but I think we will have to follow them up and keep them out of the murderous old Fourth."

"We will do it, Homer, and keep others out, too, if possible. And we will have a cherry festival

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in Cherry Valley every Fourth of July, with all of the Fourth of July abominations left out."

And so, when the sweet summer vacation was over, they took up their school work, hand in hand, with hearts full of love and trust and minds full of plans for the furtherance of the useful and beautiful, in all its departments, although the serpent of militarism, under the guise of pretentious patriotism was around and about them, coil upon coil.

PART III.

DEAR READERS; if you would be glad to know what kind of success this brave couple of humanity lovers have made during three years' time come with me and look and listen. Gentle music of the lullaby order is sounding through Cherry Valley. It is vacation time and every body is out in the open. Yes, everybody and everything almost. At least the Professor's big dining-room table is out under the trees in Morello Brand's orchard and in the middle of the big table is a little baby crib with a big canopy of green silk. In the crib nestles a little pink baby. The Professor and wife are sitting on opposite sides of the table, with pen and ink, papers and magazines near at hand. The minister and wife are sitting side by side at the head of the table and Morello Brand and wife are at the foot. Parents, teachers and scholars are there in expectant groups. The old Naumburg ballad is sung by voices old and young—quivering and strong and then the professor with his ever musical voice is going to read a paper, which has been written conjointly by himself and Geanie.

“But to begin with, said the Professor, I want

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you to answer this conundrum. Why is an Independence Day quake worse than an earthquake?"

Half a dozen hands went up but boy Ben's was the first.

"O, I know!" he shouted, "its because Independent quakes come every year and the earthquakes don't!"

"Very good!" said the Professor, "that's one of the reasons but there's a better reason, I think. What do you say, Tim?"

"I think it's because earthquakes shake houses down, and Independence-quakes shake boys up."

Another boy said it was because Independent-quakes put out boys' eyes and give them the lock-jaw and earthquakes didn't spend its spite all on boys and locks. It walked right into buildings and scattered things right and left."

A little girl said "it was because an Independent quake cost more than an earthquake. It took all you had in your little bank to make one but an earthquake didn't cost anything. The Lord let us have it free of charge."

Another little girl said "it was because we *could help* having an Independent quake but we *couldn't help* having an earthquake."

Then the minister's little girl, the smallest of the flock, raised both of her little hands and eyes too, and said solemnly. "Earthquakes are the works of the Lord Almighty, but Independence Day quakes are the works of old Satan himself."

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This sentiment was loudly applauded by the company. After the applause had subsided Professor Homer said: "You see how it is, the least among us is the greatest. The little girls, as usual, are the nearest right, but nevertheless, all of you have given excellent answers, that is all of you who have answered at all. There are a great many reasons why Independence Day quakes are worse than earthquakes; as I trust you will see after I have read you this paper of Geanie's and mine. If you have any criticisms to make on it we should be very glad to hear them as soon as I am through. We do not pretend that we have covered the whole subject, but what we say is simply this:

Earthquakes, although they are generally regarded as much more harmful than Independence-quakes, are not so in reality. They may do more harm to the earth itself and the habitations thereof, but they are not as destructive of human life as the Independence-quakes—human life which is of far more value than property. Even if it were true, as the heathen Chinese believe, that earthquakes are hurled upon us by God for our sins of greed and vanity or for despoiling Mother Earth of her treasures to make sinful use of, still they must admit that He is infinitely more tender of human life than the American Government which allows an Independence-quake to take place on the Fourth of July every year.

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The chinese idea of earthquakes may not be, after all, so very heathenish. When we consider the earth as the all-producer and credit her with reactionary power if greatly neglected or defrauded, we go farther than we think toward accounting for the tremblings, groanings, and eruptions that tear down the cities and palaces of pride which men have reared out of the materials she has so generously furnished them.

The truth is, Mother Earth, like other mothers, is long suffering and slow to anger, but when the farmer persists in gathering crops from her fields year after year, exhausting her strength and returning nothing, she cannot do otherwise than withhold her gifts. Much less can she be expected to withhold her anger while she is being exploited, gashed and despoiled of the treasure which was intended to supply the necessary wants of generations to come! How, indeed, can she be expected to stand still, any more than any other mother can, and see her immense stores of gold, silver, iron, copper, steel and stone being used up with frightful rapidity and for criminal purposes, such as the construction of monster guns, battleships, forts, death-dealing weapons and devices, which aim at the destruction of her blessed children—the human race!

This fearful waste of earth's energies and products is called business enterprise and our government is encouraging men of science everywhere to

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invent still bigger guns and things of that sort, which will outdo the monsters we already have, in "the deadly accuracy of their aim."

How much wiser it would be to set them to figuring out, how long the earth's treasures would last if they continue to be used as recklessly and criminally as they are to-day; and how long the earth itself would last if the deep shaft mining increases at the present appalling pace!

Dear old Mother Earth! No wonder she trembles, groans, yawns and spits fire, under such ungrateful and conscienceless treatment! Neither is it a wonder that the conscience of the heathen chinese should be touched by her recoil and they should hasten to bury in her bosom the cunning vases and idols of bronze, brass, silver and gold which they have constructed from the precious metals of which she has been ruthlessly robbed.

As no criticism was offered on the Professor and Geanie's paper, the master of mathematics and one of his pupils were called upon to recite a new time poem, called the Three Curses.

Master:

"What was old Egypt's curse?"

Pupil:

"Old Egypt's curse? Methinks
A story I have heard
About a wondrous old Egyptian King,
(Who must have set the pace
For Kings like old Cheops and Thothmes Third)
Who slaves and pigmies made of many men
To build a splendid Sphinx!"

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Master:

"What was the curse of Rome?"

Pupil:

"Rome's curse? O! Rome was burned
Her Seneca, self-slain,
By Nero's order, in the olden time;
And yet I've learned
The burning was no curse, although malign
And that she rose again
Out of the ashes of the dead, a monumental Rome
And made for Kings and sculptures, a palatial
home;

But for the lazzaro no place to lay his head.
If Rome was cursed it must have been,
Because she had more monuments than men.

Master:

"What was our nation's curse?"

Pupil:

"Our curse? Our nation's curse?
I guess t'was nothing worse,
Than gathering with a zest Divine,
The greatest work of every age and clime;
Or buying titles and such things
Of bankrupt lords and kings."

Master:

"O idiot and vain!
Pause! Think again!

Pupil:

"What *was* our curse? I cannot think.
What *is* our curse? I cannot say;
Unless it be a curse, *our Innocents* to slay.
And make a Moloch of our Independence Day!

Again Ben's hand went up.

"Was old Moloch any relation to Holy Moses;"
asked Ben.

Everybody laughed, but the imperturbable Ben
added. "Sunday School teacher told me all about

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Holy Moses—Meek Moses she called him but the bakery man calls him Holy Moses. What I want to know is who old Moloch was? I never heard of him afore.”

“That’s right!” said the minister. “I’m glad you have asked the question and I’m happy to say that Moloch and Moses were not at all related, that Moloch was not a human being but a statue made of brass or clay. It had great big brass arms and a fire place. When the old barbarians had a celebration they built a fire in this statue and amused themselves by throwing criminals, unmarried women and children into the arms of the statue and burning them to death. They used to throw children by the hundreds into old Moloch’s fiery arms and then play on musical instruments to drown their cries.

This was a hideous thing to do, and we can’t see how even a barbarian could do it. It occurs to us that perhaps they didn’t mean to do it when they began with their Moloch business. They may have intended to build small Molochs only, for the burning of criminals. Surely, if they had stopped with the criminals they would have done no worse than the Governments of the world are doing to day with their criminals; but they did not stop there. They went on and on with their insane Moloch celebrations just as we went on with our insane Fourth celebrations.

Perhaps they could not stop. Perhaps the cruel

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spectacle of burning criminals made them Moloch-mad and led them to build bigger and bigger Molochs for the sacrifice of a great many other people besides criminals. Truly they must have been Moloch-mad when they built that monstrous statue of Moloch down in the deep valley of Tophet and kept it burning night and day. Perhaps their leaders had become possessed of the devil and were watching for an opportunity to hurl a whole army of foreign foes into mighty Moloch's red hot arms!

At any rate they were fully prepared for something of this kind and would doubtless have done it, had not the Holy Moses (as Ben calls him), and other good and holy men taken them in hand and taught them 'the better way'.

You see dear children, that human nature was very much the same then as now. We began to celebrate our nation's day in a way which we thought to be right and harmless; but it did not prove to be harmless to the young and ignorant. They went crazy over it just as the old barbarians did over their Moloch. Then the money-changers, manufacturers and inventors took hold of them and we were booked for the burning. We had to have a bon-fire every year, that cost us from ten to twenty millions and a funeral pile that cost us the lives or limbs of five or ten thousand small boys. As soon as we got the bill, we began to quit. Now, thank the Lord, we are entirely done

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with it, we of Cherry Valley, at least. We trust that it will never again be cursed with an Independence Day quake. I remember the time when a boy came down from the mines with enough dynamite in his pockets to make a very bad quake. He told the Valley boys that he could make the biggest noise that had been made during the day. They dared him to do it. He did it and broke out all the glass in the church and school house windows! Cherry Valley seemed to me like the valley of Tophet then; but it is so no longer. Now it is sweet, old, luscious Cherry Valley and is growing more so every year.

There was silence for a moment after this, then the boy baby under the green canopy, swung its little pink fists, cried out agoo; agoo; and the Cherry Feast began.

Before it ended Morello Brand had a heart to heart talk with the children. He made it plainer to them than he ever had before that war was a crime and a misery that should be avoided in every way, shape and manner. That they should not think war, or play war or act war. He explained how it was that the savagery of war had brought on the Fourth of July savagery which had become such a disgrace to this free country—a burning shame and a sin in more ways than one; for the time came when we burned up more money in one day than it would cost to feed the hungry for a whole year. He said that the Fourth of

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July savagery had led to a business savagery, which resulted in establishing deadly industries both here and abroad for the manufacture of toy cannons, toy bombs and other implements of noise and danger, with which the American small boys were expected to celebrate their nation's day. Of course they thought the American small boys would be fools for doing it, but they expected them to do it all the same; and they did do it until they found out that they were putting \$10,000,000 into the pocket of a shrewd English manufacturer for things to burn up and were being laughed at for their idiocy. Now they are going to quit. They are going to show that they are not fools, that they know how to make better use of \$10,000,000 than to burn it up or burn up their homes or blow their eyes out or frighten their mothers and sisters out of their senses. And we are glad of it. So glad that we are going to help them all we can.

We of Cherry Valley have been helping all the boys around here, for the last three years, by establishing this Cherry Festival. You see what it is. It's a free festival. It doesn't take a cent of your money and it doesn't take your hands off, or your eyes out or give you the lock-jaw or lock up your jaws so you can't eat the cherries and enjoy them to the fullest extent.

All that we ask of you is to come right forward every one of you, girls as well as boys, and get

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one of these red ribbon badges, with a branch of cherries pictured on it and a little white card attached to it with several Dont's printed on it. The card says: Ho! Cherries ripe! Cherries ripe! Come and eat them. Don't bring anything to eat with you. Don't bring cigarets or fire-crackers in your pockets. Don't bring toy pistols, toy bombs, toy torpedoes or any other kind of explosives in your pockets—not even matches. Come with empty pockets and we will fill them right up to the brim as soon as you get here, with cherry crackers, which are away ahead of fire-crackers."

Ben's hand went up. "I say Mister, why can't we have matches in our pockets. All of the big boys and men do?"

"Because little boys don't know when to use them," replied Mr. Brand. "Didn't you hear about that little boy over in Brandberry, who put a box of matches in his pocket and went out to play 'Injun' with a little girl companion? He played she was his white captive, drove her into a corner, set fire to her dress and burned her to death before any one could reach her."

"No, I didn't hear 'bout that," said Ben, wiping his eyes. "Thank you, Mr. Brand for tellin' me. I know now why little boys can't be trusted with matches. If he has a pocket full he wants to use them jest as a boy that's got a gun wants to go huntin' and kill something with it."

"You've hit it, Ben," said Mr. Brand. "You

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see it's human nature to make use of things. It's just the same with"—Governments, he was going to say; but his wife pulled his sleeve and he broke off abruptly. He knew as well as she did, that it would not be wise to tell the boys that the Governments that went to the expense of building big battleships were sure to hunt up a pretext for using them; and so there would have been an awkward silence had she not come to the rescue by waving the cherry-red ribbons. At this signal the children rushed forward with merry shouts and laughter. They were decorated with the beautiful badges and given a recipe for making cherry crackers.

The cherry cracker recipe was a surprise from Mrs. Brand, who assured them that cherry crackers were as far above fire-crackers as heaven was above the earth.

"You all know," continued the witty little lady, that flour is made of the beautiful wheat that grows in the field and you have all seen the lovely cherries that grow on the trees in the garden. You also know that the shining wheat is dried in the sun and ground into flour and the red cherries are dried in the sun and, that when they are put together they make a healthful, harmless and handy food—food that will help you grow instead of killing or hurting you as fire-crackers are apt to do; but perhaps you don't know what fire-crackers are made of."

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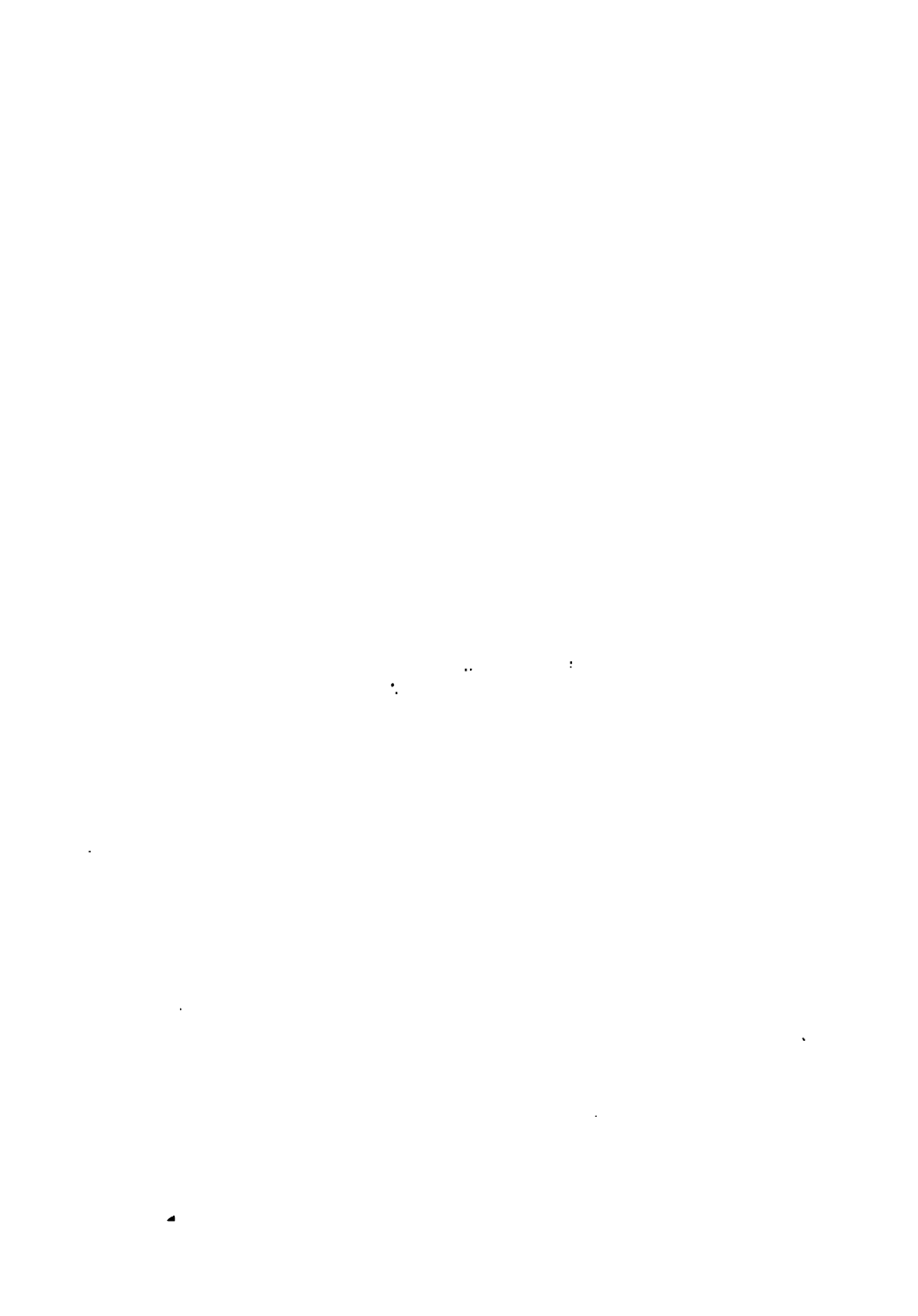
"Yes I do," shouted Ben. "They are made of fire and sulphur and saltpeter and ther aint none of 'em good to eat."

"You are almost right," laughed Mrs. Brand. The powder they are made of is a mixture of sulphur, saltpeter and coal; but the coal has fire in it and only needs a little more fire applied to it, in order to make it burn or explode. It's true, as you say, fire-crackers are made of stuff that's not fit to eat. They are made of the lowest kind of stuff—stuff that was intended for the grimy pit instead of the blue sky, stuff better fitted for old Satan's hands than the clean white hands of children. Stuff that the good God never intended children to handle or He wouldn't have hidden it away where it would be so difficult, disagreeable and dangerous to find. Stuff that has to be dug up out of the dirt, instead of that which is hung up in the clean sky, like cherries, or grows up under the sunshine, like wheat."

"O, the beautiful cherries and the blessed wheat!" exclaimed Mrs. Brand. "Stand still my children, and let me fill your pockets full of the harmless and non-explosive cherry crackers they make."

They did as they were bidden. Then they rode home, munching cherry crackers by the way and singing the praises of the Cherry Festival of Cherry Valley, which one and all agreed was far better than the best kind of a "Fourth of July racket."

[THE END]



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